United Nations A/HRC/37/NGO/197

General Assembly

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9 March 2018

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Human Rights Council
Thirty-seventh session
26 February-23 March 2018
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by IT for Change, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is hereby circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[9 March 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-03686(E)
1803686

Please recycle

Privacy in the Internet Age

This statement is on behalf of the Just Net Coalition.

All people have the right to privacy, and to use the Internet without mass surveillance. This is critically important for the future of humanity, and the violations of this right pose an urgent threat to democracy, and to the right to freedom of discrimination on the basis of religion, and to other human rights. We therefore welcome and strongly support the initiative of the Special Rapporteur on Privacy in regard to a corresponding Legal Instrument.

In addition, we emphasize another aspect of privacy. Privacy is not only about being able to keep some information and conversations strictly confidential. There is also the larger scale of the privacy of a social group, even if that group is not meeting and communicating in strict secrecy. In our view, personal and social data must belong respectively to the relevant individuals and social groups. Necessary policy frameworks to operationalise effective control and ownership of digital data must be developed.

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Human Rights Council
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Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Next Century Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is hereby circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[8 March 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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1804037

Please recycle

Albinos in East Africa: prompting discussion for a hopeful future

Mr President, the Next Century Foundation wishes to draw attention to the current situation of those with Albinism in East Africa, especially in the United Republic of Tanzania. Those living with Albinism in this region may spend their lives ostracised from their communities, living in fear of violence and battling the health concerns and issues that arise as a result of the condition they are born with. The experience of those with Albinism is one of discrimination based on colour.

Tanzania has a higher rate of people born with Albinism than its neighbouring nations. In Tanzania's communities there are differing, and sometimes dangerous, views of Albino peoples. Witch doctors proliferate the idea that Albino skin and body parts have magical or mystical properties relating to prosperity and good luck. This has resulted in a great degree of violence, such as the mutilation or murder of these people and even the vandalising of graves as body parts with these so-called magical properties are sought out. It is a lucrative market. In 2015, the UN itself reported that there had been 75 murders of Albinos in Tanzania from the year 2000 but also acknowledged that this is most likely not reflective of the true number. Conversely, other superstitious views see Albinism as a sign of bad luck or a curse thus also rendering those with Albinism vulnerable to risk and violence. Violence is not the only issue faced by Albino peoples. There is great misunderstanding concerning the condition and this leads to social exclusion by communities and even families with infanticide and child abandonment not being uncommon. Families too face the same exclusion if they choose to protect members with the condition.

In Tanzania, 90% of those with the condition will die before they are 40 years old. Affected eyesight and eye damage alongside hair loss are two issues. However, it is skin cancer that presents a truly huge problem for those with Albinism. Due to the lack of understanding about the condition, continuous and unprotected exposure means that skin cancer is rampant. Sun-cream is not a common or affordable commodity across Tanzania and it is something as simple as this product that could make a real difference.

The NCF expresses its support and praise to the organisations and governments who have spoken out against the superstitious views and violence against Albino peoples and those who have made efforts to alleviate the suffering of those with Albinism through education and relief. Whether that be Tanzania's president condemning witch doctors, the sun cream organisation Kilimanjaro Suncare in Tanzania that provides carefully formulated sunscreen products for those with Albinism amongst other initiatives or international organisations such as the Global Medical Relief Fund that have produced prosthetic limbs for Albino victims.

However, we now call upon the UN and international community to raise further awareness of these issues by raising the profile of such discussion. The human rights violations of Albino peoples often fails to gain the attention it needs. We also wish to see support for international organisations and in-country efforts to educate, provide relief and breakdown stigmas concerning those with Albinism.

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Written statement* submitted by the Next Century Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is hereby circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[8 March 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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1804034

Please recycle

Plastic Planet: A Sustainable Future?

Mr President. The destruction of the environment is no longer a distant possibility; its degradation has harmed vital ecosystems and impacted the livelihoods of the people that depend on them and has also had negative effects on human health and well-being. It is no exaggeration to say that the environment is now very much a human security concern.

The Next Century Foundation commends the profound commitment of the UN to combat the threat of environmental degradation through the sustainable development goals and through the remarkable work carried out by the Environment Programme.

However while good ecological practices are becoming more mainstream and humanity is becoming more aware of the extent to which human action is harming the planet, the NCF wishes to particularly emphasize the dangers posed by the increasing scale of global plastic pollution.

According to the UN's own figures, there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans by 2050 unless people stop using single-use plastic items. The danger posed by plastic waste entering the world's seas and oceans is not only harmful to wildlife; it is also moving up the food chain and threatening human sustenance. Oceans and seas are crucial resources for human existence and their maintenance makes the Earth habitable.

The NCF believes that improper care of these resources could make humankind's future unsustainable. Despite the vast number of pledges and promises made by nations to reduce the amount of plastic waste entering the oceans, the distinct lack of timetables and lack of legally binding agreements has hampered any resolute and meaningful action.

While we are encouraged by the reuse of resources through recycling, this solution alone is not enough. We instead urge nations to consider more front-line solutions; to adopt a legal commitment to the environment; to move towards a plastic-free world and perhaps most crucially to establish a realistic time frame for when this will be achieved.

We echo the opening statements of the Stockholm Declaration, that man is both creature and moulder of his environment. We have all played a part in creating this problem, we must therefore work together to find the solutions.

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Thirty-seventh session
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Agenda item 2
Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Written statement* submitted by Action contre la faim, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is hereby circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 March 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-04554(E)
1804554

Please recycle

Action Contre la Faim statement on Sri Lanka

Honorable Members of the Human Rights Council,

11 years ago, 17 Action Against Hunger humanitarian workers were lined up and assassinated a bullet to the head in the premises of the organization, in Muttur, Sri Lanka.

This massacre sadly classifies as one of the most atrocious war crimes committed against humanitarian personnel. In the 11 years since the massacre occurred, despite Action Against Hunger continuous and strong advocacy for justice and as the Report of the High Commissioner states it, "no noticeable progress" has been observed in ensuring accountability in this emblematic case.

Action Against Hunger strongly reiterates previous demands supporting recommendations made by the High Commissioner and calls for Sri Lanka to establish, without any further delay, a credible **special court, habilitated to deal with the most serious crimes**, associated to a clear timeline of implementation.

For the credibility and independence of justice, this court must **integrate international judges, prosecutors and investigators mandated to try war crimes and crimes against humanity.** The court should ensure that any investigation be truly independent and must integrate a prosecuting organ, a defence office, and a witness and victims protection programme.

Action Against Hunger submits that the United Nations and the international community must urgently address Sri Lanka's utter failure to fulfil its international obligations with regards to fight against impunity. In the absence of credible action, Action against Hunger calls on Member States to exercise universal jurisdiction as required.

Our 17 colleagues killed in Muttur were there to help the populations recover from disasters. Their unpunished murder is sending a grave message: that aid workers can be killed in absolute impunity.

In light of current events in Sri Lanka and around the world, this cannot set a precedent.